

VLR-9/18/96 NRHP-12/16/96

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name William Byrd Hotel DHR 127-0466

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2501 West Broad Street not for publication _____
city or town Richmond vicinity _____
state Virginia code 036 county _____ code 760 Zip 23220

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official

October 24, 1996
Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is: _____ other (explain): _____
_____ entered in the National Register
_____ See continuation sheet.
_____ determined eligible for the _____ Signature of Keeper
National Register
_____ See continuation sheet. Date of Action _____
_____ determined not eligible for the National Register
_____ removed from the National Register

**William Byrd Hotel
Richmond, Virginia**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ **X** private-
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

X building(s)
___ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register n/a

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Car: DOMESTIC Sub: HOTEL

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page or a sheet of stationery.

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: WORK IN PROGRESS Sub: DOMESTIC
MULTIPLE DWELLING[illegible]

William Byrd Hotel
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7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

NEO-CLASSICAL REVIVAL

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof TERRA COTTA

walls BRICK

LIMESTONE, TERRA COTTA

other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

William Byrd Hotel
Richmond, Virginia

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Hugh C. Miller, FAIA, Consultant

Organization: N/A date 07/96

street & number: 2629 West Grace Street telephone (804)353-0863

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23220

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name The William Byrd Hotel Associates, L.P. Attn: Robert B. Balls, Jr.

street & number 2501 West Broad St. telephone (804)359-5200

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23220

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127, and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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7. Description

The William Byrd Hotel is an 11-story building designed as a three-part vertical block with Neo-Classical Revival details consisting of a base, shaft and capital on its major facades facing Broad Street and Davis Avenue. The south (alley) elevation and the west elevation (facing the interior of the block) are unadorned with the exception of the continuation of the motif of the top story and parapet around the building. These design elements present the building as a highly organized composition when viewed from the north - at the front of the station or from the east - traveling on Broad Street from downtown. This massing, in juxtaposition with the Broad Street Station dome of the same height, is a dominant feature on the skyline of west Richmond.

The plan of the tower block was a simple rectangle (128' 8" X 53' 4"). There was a 26' 4" wide element on the west; the building was one story high along Broad Street for the dinning room and two stories high at the rear for the kitchen and service area. Historically, there was no landscape treatment as the buildings filled the lot.¹ On Broad Street and along Davis Avenue, the base of the building is Indiana limestone. There are large storefront display windows at the ground floor, giving the building a transparent openness along the street. The entrances originally were marked by copper clad, glass roofed hung marques that extended over the sidewalks. The one-story dining room to the west of the building mass extended the storefront facade with the same architectural details. Later one-story shops built along Broad Street with similar storefront designs extended to the Capitol Theater. These stores were demolished in the 1960s.

The shaft of the building is a buff, textured brick laid in common bond with headers every tenth course. Light buff terra cotta quoins and window sills match the color and texture of the limestone base. The fenestration pattern is stacked vertically for all floors and is horizontally symmetrical with subtle differences of spacing and window size. The north elevation is three bays. The windows are organized around the vertical center line of the shaft, with a grouping of a standard large (4'6" X 5'8 3/4") one-over-one double-hung sash windows flanked by narrow (3'6") double-hung sash windows of the same height. The larger windows are used at the corners. The east elevation is also organized around the centerline that is aligned with the Davis Avenue entrance. The same large windows occur at the center and at the corners. Four slightly narrower windows (4' 0" wide) are organized between the large windows, producing an 11-bay elevation. The narrower windows are spaced closer together, giving each elevation a horizontal rhythm that strengthens the vertical accent of the large windows at the corners and center. These vertical window alignments are terminated by small horizontal windows in the cornice architrave. The south (alley) and the west elevations follow a similar pattern of window groups without the subtleties of spacing. The west

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elevation is utilitarian with a large brick chimney stack that extends above the penthouse roof and an exterior fire escape (removed in 1996). The windows at the fire escape and interior stair are multipane metal frame with wire glass.

The "capital" of this building design is the most decoratively elaborate element, stylized as an entablature with an "architrave" of garlands festooned in swags. The tenth floor window openings are quoined with terra cotta, like the building corners, and surmounted with fluted ornament and small false windows to form a frieze. The cornice is restrained in its design, projecting only 18 inches beyond the building face, although an egg and dart molding is visible at its base. The parapet has a simple base and coping molding.

The building is surmounted by a large pent house (37' x 37'10") located toward the rear of the roof and aligned with the west wall. It is three stories high with a one-story addition. The penthouse is constructed of similar brick and has a simple terra cotta cornice and quoins. The penthouse windows generally follow the vertical alignment of the windows in the main block but are different sizes on each elevation. There are two pairs of French doors on the north elevation which open on to a roof terrace.

The William Byrd Hotel is a steel frame building with concrete flat slab floors and roof decks. The fillers in the system are Psyrobar tile units that provided flat ceiling to receive plaster. The steel columns and beams were encased in concrete. Most of the beams are expressed in the interior spaces. Although the walls are non-load bearing, there is no expression of their curtain wall function. There is a brick header course every ten courses and a metal tie at the fifth course. The back up is eight-inch structural clay tile, resulting in a total exterior wall thickness of twelve inches of masonry.

The interior plaster finish is placed directly on the tile. The exterior walls are buff, rough textured brick. The face brick is supported on shelf angles at each opening. The interior partitions are gypsum-block, plastered, except in wet areas where structural hollow tile and ceramic tile finishes are used.

The main floor was originally organized around an ell-shaped lobby in the center of the building. It was entered from a main door on Davis Avenue and extended along the west wall to the Broad Street entrance, located at the corner of the main block of the building. The reception desk was located along the west wall and received light from a skylight in the roof of the one story dining room and kitchen building. Two elevators and a stairway to the mezzanine were located to the south of the lobby. A coffee shop and stores operated at the corner of Davis and Broad and a barber shop was open for business on Davis Avenue. The dining room was to the west of the lobby. Other portions of the first floor included the kitchen, storage and service stair and service elevators.

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The finishes in the public spaces included marble floors, stairs and wainscoting. Walls were plaster with a plaster cornice at the structural bays. The columns and pilasters were plaster panels arranged as square and rectangular elements encasing the steel structure. The capitals were made of composite material in a stylized motif. At the time of the opening, the interior was described in glowing terms: "The lobby and the lounge follow the Italian Renaissance period, the dining room after the Venetian style and the coffee shop follows the Pompeian, giving a pleasing variance to the interior finish."²

The original mezzanine level was designed as an important part of the public and guest activities of the hotel. These grand spaces included an upper lobby, a private parlor, ladies parlor and a private dining room or ballroom that could be subdivided into three spaces. There was a serving room adjacent to the dining room, built as a second floor over the main kitchen to the west of the main block of the hotel.

The nine typical hotel floors were organized with exterior guest rooms on a double-loaded corridor. There were 22 rooms per floor, each with a private bath. Each floor was served by two elevators located near the rear of the block on the west side of the floor. There was also a service elevator that opened onto the service (fire) stair behind the passenger elevators. An exterior fire escape was located near the front of the building on the west walls.

The roof garden was an advertised feature of the hotel. It was accessible by elevators to the first level of the penthouse. The interior space of the penthouse formed an entry lobby with french doors opening directly onto the flat floor that was paved with quarry tile. The upper levels of the penthouse are used for mechanical equipment. Sometime after the opening, a large electric sign reading HOTEL WM BYRD was placed on the roof near the front of the building. This sign has been removed.

In 1996 the renovation of the building into apartments began. Although the public spaces of the first and second floor interiors were much altered in the 1948 and 1961 modernization, much of the original finish has survived on the first floor. Marble in the original floor patterns and wainscot, and the grand stairs to the mezzanine are intact. The elevator wall, with marble door surround and a metal mail box with chute, remain largely intact. Some ceiling and pilaster ornamentation survive, as does the original door to the barbershop.³

The new first floor will retain the general functional relationships of the historic plan. The elevators, main stair and the four adjacent bays that form the core of the original lobby remain. Although the main entrance will be on the west as it was in the motel period, there will still be an entrance directly from Davis Avenue. The Broad Street entrance will be at the original location, but it will enter into a large open multi-purpose room. This room occupies the entire width of the

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building along Broad Street and two bays along Davis Avenue. It also is entered from the lobby. The barber shop will remain where it has been since 1925, and the shop space in the southwest corner will be a beauty salon. These uses will permit the views into and out of the first floor through the restored shop windows. New management space, offices, tenant services and security are organized off the lobby. Mechanical equipment and building services will occupy the old kitchen area.

Every effort will be made to restore the decorative elements of the original first floor lobby, including the elevator doors, mail chute and main stair. The surviving marble flooring and wainscot will be retained, and the plaster pilasters and ceiling ornaments will be repaired or replicated.

The second floor, significantly changed in the 1948 and 1961 alterations, will now become eight new one-bedroom apartments. The original elevator lobby and open stair to the first floor will be restored using surviving floor, wall and ceiling finishes. This space will be used for a tenants' parlor and will provide access to common tenant areas - a library, guest toilets and laundry. The floored-over mezzanine will not be opened up.

The typical hotel floors will become apartments by combining two guest rooms. There will be a minimum of removal of partitions. Many bathrooms will be retained including the original tub and tile surround. A variety of apartment plan types have been designed so that most new kitchens, bathrooms, closets and handicap accessible spaces are in the area occupied by the original bathrooms. The elevator lobby's floors, walls and ceilings, as well as adjacent paired guest-room doors with transoms, will be restored to their original appearance in a design that meets fire and safety codes. The remaining corridor floor finish, wall, ceiling and door treatments will meet modern code standards. The elevator cabs, upgraded in 1961, will remain, and the interior service stair will continue to function as a fire stair.

The first level of the pent house will be restored for tenant use and access to the roof. The existing roof will be covered with a new membrane and a walkable surface for use by the tenants.

Good evidence of the original exterior design and finishes does exist. When the 1961 precast concrete panels were removed from the second floor, the underlying limestone surrounds and wall surface were found to be intact. Ornamental concrete plaster, with inset terra cotta scroll and spandrel panel between the first and second floors, was revealed to be in good condition and will be repaired. The limestone pilasters, their capitals and portions of the architrave removed from the second floor in 1961 will be restored based on the details from the original drawings and photographs.

Above the second floor, the exterior masonry is in good condition with the exception of the terra cotta quoins which will be repaired. The windows and the storefronts will be replaced to present

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an appearance of the original design. The street entrances will remain at their original locations; the marquees, however, will not be restored. A new stair tower will be built on the west wall to replace the exterior fire escape. An automobile entrance with porte cochere will be built on the west wall. The new entrance will enter directly into the original lobby. The redesigned exterior west wall of the first and second floors will have new windows to suit the interior functions. The wall surface will be EIFS (stucco) in compatible color, texture and pattern of panels with the brick, stone and terra cotta of the original building. The driveway and parking area will be demarcated with a six-foot high decorative metal fence and a wall along the alley. The original lot frontage on Broad Street is now reduced from 264' 4" to 177' with the new building occupying the full depth of the block at the corner. The work for this exterior restoration and interior rehabilitation is being done in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

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8. Statement of Significance

The William Byrd Hotel, a good example of an urban, Neo-Classic Revival high-rise building, was designed by Richmond architect Marcellus E. Wright, Sr. It was built in 1925 in response to the design and location of the new Broad Street Station, an area opened in 1919 and envisioned to be the new commercial center of the City's West End expansion. This was an opportunity to develop a commercial node at this transportation interface of the railroad terminal and Richmond's street car system and to encourage new commercial activity on Broad Street. The design and construction of the Hotel are significant as the first and only high-rise commercial building on Broad Street west of the City's central business district. For many travelers the William Byrd Hotel and the Broad Street Station were the gateway image of Richmond. The Hotel, its shops, the Capitol Theater and the Broad Street Station flourished through World War II, functioning as a center for activities related to travel and leisure into the 1970s. At the time it was erected, the William Byrd was considered to be "a monument to Richmond's energy, talent and progressiveness".⁴ Although the uses of the Hotel and Station have changed today, their designs are enduring, and their mass and height are landmarks on Richmond's western skyline.

Historical Background

The 1925 construction of the high-rise William Byrd Hotel on West Broad Street, at a location 27 blocks from Capitol Square and far west of the central business district is significant for a number of reasons. Locating a high-rise building in this vicinity was an opportunity to make a visual and architectural statement about location and to create a new commercial node for the City. The usual reasons for erecting a high-rise building--cost and scarcity of land-- did not apply to this vacant land across from the Broad Street Station. The motivation for this design was about commercial identity.⁵

The development of Broad Street Station and the West End of Richmond in the 20th century is integral to the history of the City. The Broad Street Station, designed by John Russell Pope and opened in 1919, is a monumental Neo-Classical building surmounted by a dome that dominated the skyline of the West End. The station became the major railroad terminal for people arriving and departing the City.⁶ Commercial development, however, was slow to follow. The portion of Broad Street near the station was a wide paved thoroughfare with trees along its perimeters and the street car tracks in the center of the street. Blocks of vacant land sat waiting for development.

By the time the station was built, the residential districts of Richmond's West End were well developed. The two most desirable residential streets in Richmond--Grace Street and Monument Avenue, the two adjacent streets south of Broad Street--were essentially built-out.⁷ The remainder of the Fan district area was mostly filled. Most of the area west of the Boulevard had been subdivided, and a variety of residential buildings--large homes, town house rows and apartments--

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were being built.⁸ Although the street car and the automobile had made it possible for Richmonders to live away from the old center city area, work, shopping and entertainment were still downtown.

The construction of the William Byrd Hotel was a bold but logical move to create a new center of activity across from the train station on major street car lines and near a large established residential district. The 11-story hotel tower dominated the corner at Davis Avenue and Broad Street. Davis Avenue, a wider cross street that connects Monument Avenue and the Davis Monument with Broad Street, creates an open corner. The remainder of the Hotel's lot fronting on Broad Street was occupied by one story stores that provided services and goods for the travelers and neighbors. A year after the Hotel opened, the Capitol Theater opened (1926) at the other end of the block. This movie theater was the first to show sound movies in Virginia (1927) and continued to show first run movies until it closed in the 1980s. The corner of Broad Street and Robinson was occupied by a 2-story, cast iron front shop house that was built in the late 1890s and over the years housed ice cream and candy stores, billiard rooms and restaurants. In the late 1940s it became Julian's Italian Restaurant. This restaurant and theater were a "pizza and movie date," or outing, for many Richmonders and out-of-town visitors until it and the Capitol Theater closed in the 1980s.⁹

At the time the William Byrd Hotel was built the high-rise skeletal frame building of ten stories or more was still considered novel in Richmond. The acceptance of modern commercial buildings, including hotels, was well established, but the architectural expression of choice was inspired by buildings of New York and other east coast cities. Most of the high-rise commercial buildings on Main Street built prior to 1930 were designed by New York architects. Their motifs of a simple tower shaft with elaborate lower and upper levels were the standard treatment. This composition of the building as a classical column with a base, shaft and capital became an understood vocabulary for local architects in the design of high-rise buildings.¹⁰

Carrère and Hastings of New York designed the original Jefferson Hotel (1895) 100 block of West Franklin Street and the first part of the Hotel Richmond (1904) at 9th and East Grace streets. John Kevan Peebles of Peebles & Ferguson Architects of Norfolk, Virginia, was associated with Carrere and Hastings in rebuilding the Jefferson Hotel after it burned in 1901. Only the Main Street portion of the Jefferson has a high-rise motif. The firm also completed the Hotel Richmond in 1911. Other Peeble-designed hotels in Richmond include the Hotel Murphy (1911) at 807 East Broad Street and the Capitol Hotel (1916) that stands at the northwest corner of 8th and East Grace streets. Other Richmond high-rise hotels built prior to the William Byrd included the Hotel Stumpf (1909) at 728 East Main Street, designed by Carl Ruehrmund--a seven-story mid-rise but with the same arrangement of elements as the high-rise buildings-- and the Raleigh Hotel (built as the Rueger in 1912, now called the Commonwealth Park Suites Hotel) at 9 North Ninth Street designed by Charles Robinson.

The William Byrd Hotel of 1925 was the first high-rise hotel designed by Richmond

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architect, Marcellus E. Wright, Sr., and the first major hotel to open in Richmond in more than eight years. Architectural historian Robert P. Winthrop believes that the success of this hotel inspired Richmond Hotels, Inc., to commission Mr. Wright to design the John Marshall Hotel that opened in 1927 on the northeast corner of 5th and East Franklin streets.¹¹

Mr. Wright was familiar with high-rise design when he accepted the commission for the William Byrd Hotel. Some of his work can still be seen around Richmond, such as the Grace Street Bank and Trust (1922, now the Media General Building) at 301-303 East Grace Street and the Grace American Building, (1923) at 404 East Grace Street. Marcellus E. Wright, Sr. was also responsible for the design of a number of other significant non-commercial buildings including the Johnston Willis Sanatorium, the Acca Temple Mosque (1927, now the Richmond Landmark Theater) at Monroe Park and the Parcel Post Office Building (1929) on East Main Street. He and Philadelphia architect Paul Cret were awarded the prize for the best design for the Virginia War Memorial Carillon in Byrd Park in 1925.

The William Byrd Hotel located at 2501 West Broad Street, at the corner of Broad Street and Davis Avenue, was formally opened at 5 pm on Thursday, October 1, 1925. This opening was directed toward the "citizens of Richmond" as an invitation to view "Richmond's Most Modern Hotel" in an advertisement in the *Richmond News Leader*. The formal opening drew a crowd numbering in the thousands according to the Friday, October 2, 1925 *Richmond News Leader*. The news account states that "Thousands Visit New Byrd Hotel" and "Seizing the opportunity to see for themselves just what has been accomplished in the construction and equipment of a modern hotel, thousands of men and women from all sections of the city visited the William Byrd Hotel on West Broad Street yesterday afternoon and evening; police lines were established shortly after the hotel was opened at 5 pm in order to expedite the movement of the crowd that threatened to jam the new hotel from top to bottom... From the roof garden to the cellar the \$1 million addition to the city's hotels was given a thorough inspection by the people of Richmond. A special orchestra from New York provided music, and later in the evening there was dancing for those who wished to try the new floors."¹²

The William Byrd Hotel was developed by Hotel Richmond Realty Corporation (later known as Richmond Hotels, Incorporated) on a site described in a *Richmond Times-Dispatch* article as "the land opposite the Union Station and one of the most valuable pieces of land in the West End, running west from Davis Avenue 264 feet, 4 inches, a part of the 'Old Richardson Farm' has been sold by W.F. Richardson, Jr. trustee to the hotel Richmond Realty Corporation."¹³ The 87' 4" space west of the hotel was occupied by stores demolished in 1961.

This 11-story hotel contained 198 guest rooms, each with a private bath. There was a two-story lobby in the center of the main floor. The dining room and coffee shop were both accessible from the lobby and the street. The main floor shops included a barbershop that still operates today

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(1925 to present). The mezzanine level included the ballroom, private dining rooms and parlors. The penthouse provided access to a "roof garden". A billiard room and service facilities occupied the basement level. In-house services included a kitchen, an ice making plant, bakery and laundry. A free standing brick garage was constructed along the alley adjacent to the hotel for guest parking. This building was demolished in 1961.

The William Byrd Hotel is a good example of the steel-framed high-rise building. Opened in 1925, the hotel followed the same type of new high-rise construction techniques that were used in other significant Richmond high-rise buildings such as the First National Bank Building at 9th and Main Streets. Advertisements and press releases about the hotel spoke of its "Modern Construction and Fire-proof rooms".¹⁴ The construction technique utilized was considered revolutionary and consisted of a steel frame with no internal load bearing walls. All of the interior walls and floors were "fire-proof", with materials of concrete, structural clay tile and gypsum block. The exterior and interior walls were built after the steel frame was in place.

In June of 1948 the interior plan of the William Byrd Hotel was altered from the original design. The mezzanine of the lobby was floored over, creating a new second floor. The new lobby was then reconfigured. The registration area that ran along the western side of the first floor was moved to the eastern side of the lobby. Adjacent to the coffee shop three of the stores were consolidated into one area. This new area fronting on Broad Street was opened as a 200-seat cafeteria.

By 1961 the trend in the hospitality industry was the motel, not older hotels. The automobile had replaced the train as the method by which visitors traveled from city to city. The William Byrd Hotel was given a new name and a new face. The William Byrd Hotel now was called the "William Byrd Motor Hotel." The first floor received new metal store fronts. The first and second floors were modernized and the plan was changed and the pilasters were boxed out with plywood. At this time the marquees were removed. Precast concrete panels were installed over the second floor windows to tie together the massing of the new two-story additions visually. An automobile entrance was built to the west. This new entrance was established under a large steel and concrete canopy that extended over the driveway and along the street. The concourse entrance to the lobby registration area passed beside the new banquet room entrance. The cafeteria was converted into a banquet room, including a portion of the coffee shop. The coffee shop was expanded outward into the lobby area. An exterior parking lot was established where the garages and stores had been. Except for redecorating, the guest rooms and their bathrooms remained unchanged during these alterations to the public spaces on the first and second floors. Door and window trim, bathroom fixtures and trim remain largely intact on the interiors of the guest rooms and halls.

The Hotel Richmond Realty Corporation owned not only the William Byrd Hotel but also the Hotel Murphy, the John Marshall and the Hotel Richmond. Lloyd U. Noland of Newport News

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was president of the corporation and in 1936 bought out the American Bank's interest for \$593,127 cash. The corporation continued to operate the William Byrd Hotel and made the renovations of 1948 and 1951. On June 28, 1974, the William Byrd Hotel was sold to the Ball Realty Corp., Robert B. Ball, Sr. President. They owned the property until it was sold to the William Byrd Hotel Associates, L.P. in 1994. The Balls have an interest in this limited partnership.¹⁵

The architectural and transportation impact of Broad Street Station was a direct influence on the operation of the Hotel. It was an instant landmark location and a steady generator of traffic for the Hotel. The Station was one of the nation's last great terminals, built during the Golden Age of railroads, displaying the first use of a Roman dome for a major railroad station.¹⁶ It was built by the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad Company and the Atlantic Coast Line who agreed that all their trains would run through this station. In 1958 an agreement was reached that the Seaboard Air Line Railway (SAL) trains would use Broad Street and not Main Street Station.

In addition to scheduled trains, there were excursion trains to Ashland and to the beaches. In 1955 the "Santa Claus Trains" began to run in an annual event that accommodated over 6,600 passengers on three trains that shuttled between Ashland and Richmond. The greatest usage of the Station was during World War II. In 1943 it was not unusual for the station to accommodate over 30,000 passengers a day. In that year the RF&P operated 20,898 passenger trains, of which 2,363 were troop trains, resulting in an average of 57 passenger trains per day. Union Station was also equipped to handle U.S. Mail, Railway Express and baggage. With this deluge of people, mail and packages, there was a continuous stream of pedestrians, cars, taxis and trucks in front of the Station and the Hotel.

After the war, passenger traffic began to decline in spite of major renovations to the interior and exterior of the Station: in the 1950s railroad travel was not the choice of the American public. In 1969 the number of passengers carried by RF&P dropped to below the one million mark for the first time since the Depression years. At the same time the Station's news stand and elegant dining room were closed.¹⁷ It was during this period that the William Byrd was trying to operate as an uptown motel.

The William Byrd Hotel was a travelers hotel and an uptown event hotel for Richmonders. The ballroom, private dining rooms and roof gardens catered business, social and political events. The private political Colon Club met here regularly for 7:30 am breakfasts of chitlins, ham, scrambled eggs and bourbon from the early 1930s until the 1960s. After renovations to the second floor, a popular nightclub and an after-hours disco operated in the Hotel.¹⁸

The Hotel name was used not only for the Hotel shops, including the William Byrd Barber Shop, but also for some of the adjacent shops. When the corner across Davis Avenue was developed as an open "ell" shaped shopping center in 1930, one of the stores here traded as the "William Byrd Confectionary".¹⁹ The Hotel clearly had created a place name for this corner on West Broad Street.

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The William Byrd Hotel was built in response to the successful operation of the Broad Street Station that began to receive passenger service on January 6, 1919. In 1971 Amtrak assumed operation of passenger service and all rail passenger service was moved to the Greendale Station in Henrico County on November 15, 1975. The closing of the Broad Street Station was the death knell for the Hotel. The William Byrd Motor Hotel ceased operation in the 1980s, and the building has been vacant since. In 1996 the William Byrd Hotel Associates, Limited Partnership, began a restoration of the exterior of the Hotel and the renovation of the interior for 107 one-bedroom apartments. This work is being carried out in accordance with the *Secretary of Interior Standards for Preservation Projects*. The building is now called the William Byrd Apartment Homes for Senior Living and is expected to be occupied in the Fall of 1996.

The Hotel, its shops, the Capitol Theater and the Broad Street Station were active during the Depression, flourished through World War II and functioned into the 1970s as a center for activities related to travel, commerce and leisure. Although the scale of the 1930s' commercial buildings along Broad Street was lower and related more to automobile service, a commercial strip did develop during and following the Depression. This area is now in the City's plan for a revitalized urban business district. As architecture and urban design, the Hotel, along with the Broad Street Station, the Capitol Theater and adjacent shops, have contributed to the economic, social and cultural history of the City. The architecture and design intent endure today. The Broad Street Station, operating as the Science Museum of Virginia, and the William Byrd operating as apartments, bring landmark qualities to visual focus in this location as a special place on Broad Street.

Endnotes

1. Marcellus E. Wright, "William Byrd Hotel, Richmond," original plans, elevations and details at Marcellus Wright, Cox and Smith Architects (Hereafter cited as "Original Plans") used for description of original building.
2. *Richmond News Leader*, September 30, 1925.
3. William R. White, "Renovation to the William Byrd Hotel, Richmond," and "Historic Preservation Certificate Application, Part 2," in file of the VDHR, hereafter called "renovation plans" used for description of new work.
4. *Richmond News Leader*, September 30, 1925.
5. Robert P. Winthrop, telephone interview, July, 1996.

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6. Elizabeth Cheek, "Broad Street Station," National Register of Historic Places nomination form, 1971, at VDHR.
7. Drew Carneal, interview, July, 1996.
8. David Edwards, "West of the Boulevard Historic District," National Register of Historic Places, nomination form, 1993, at VDHR.
9. Hugh C. Miller, "Brief History and Survey of Historic Buildings on West Broad Street . . ." on file at VDHR.
10. Robert P. Winthrop, *Architecture of Downtown Richmond* (Richmond, Va.: Historic Richmond Foundation, 1982), 12.
11. Robert P. Winthrop, telephone interview, July, 1996.
12. *Richmond News Leader*, October 2, 1925.
13. *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 11, 1922.
14. *Richmond News Leader*, September 30, 1925.
15. Robert B. Ball, Jr. Interview, April, 1996.
16. Elizabeth Cheek, "Broad Street Station," National Register of Historic Places, nomination form, 1971.
17. William E. Griffin, Jr., *One Hundred Years of History Along the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad*. (Richmond: RF&P, 1984), 47-55.
18. Robert B. Ball, Jr., interview, July, 1996.
19. Hugh C. Miller, "Brief History and Survey of Historic Buildings on West Broad Street..." on file at Richmond City Hall.

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White, William R., "Renovations to William Byrd Hotel, Richmond," original drawings dated November 15, 1995 in the files of the Department of Historic Resources.

Wright, Marcellus E., "William Byrd Hotel, Richmond," original drawings dated October 1924, photo files at Marcellus Wright Cox and Smith Architects, Richmond.

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Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) Vertical files

Broad Street Station 127-226 (1971)

Monument Avenue Historic District, 127-174 (1969)

West of the Boulevard Historic District,, 127-742 (1993/94)

William Byrd Hotel, 127-0466, Preliminary Information Form (1995)

Virginia Historical Society: photographic files

Interviews

Robert B. Ball, Jr, Senior Vice President, Ball Realty Corp. General Partner of William Byrd Hotel Assoc., LP, interview, notes and data collection, April and July, 1119 with Hugh C. Miller

Carneal, Drew, author of *A History of the Fan District*, Richmond (at press), July 1996 with Hugh C. Miller.

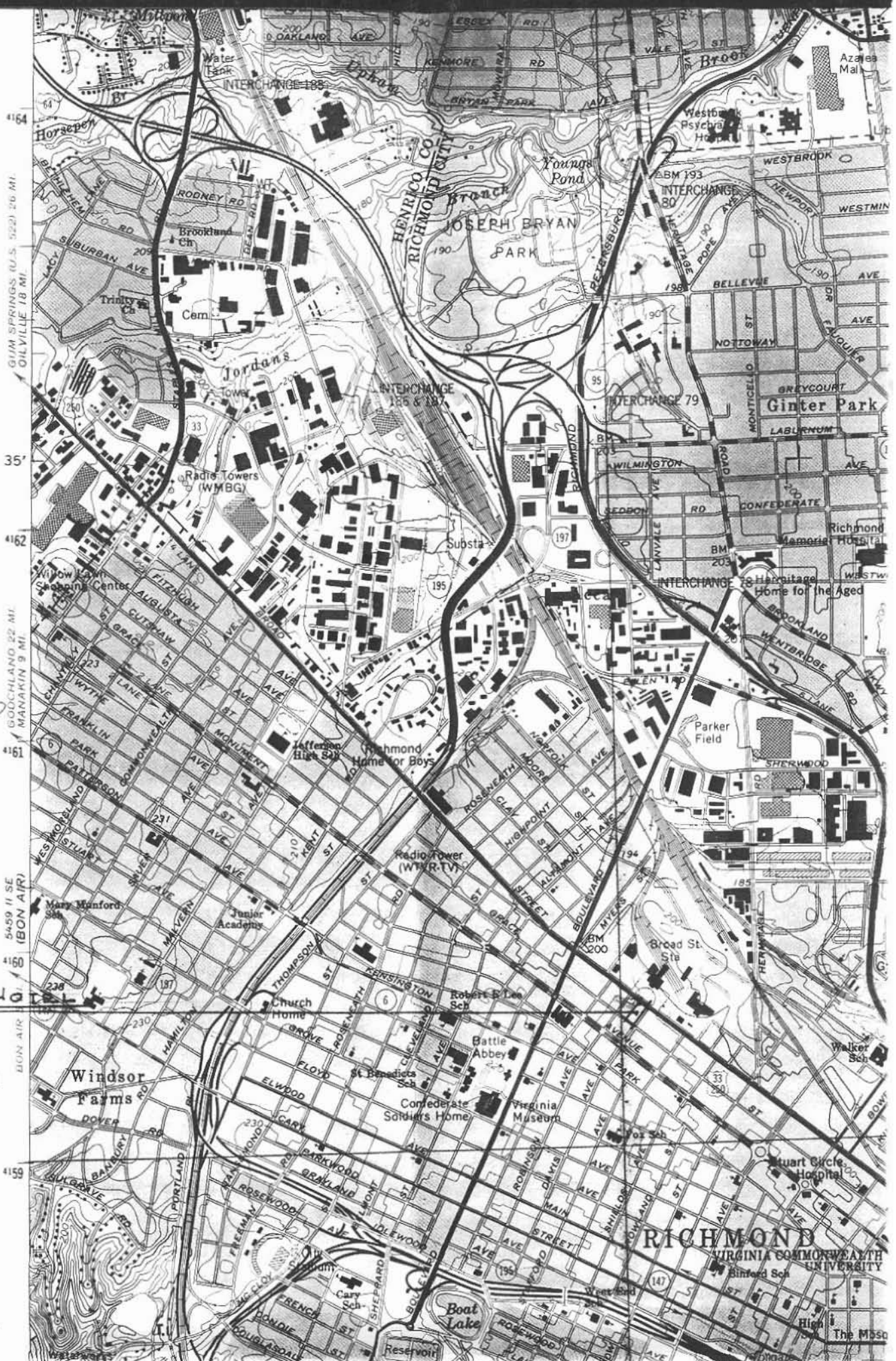
Winthrop, Robert P., architectural historian. interview, July 1996 with Hugh C. Miller

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The street address is 2501 West Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia. The site is a rectangular lot-- 177' along the south line of West Broad Street and the rear alley, and 129' along the west line of Davis Avenue and the interior of the block, being on the south west corner of this intersection. It is recorded as tax parcel **W-000-1130-004** in the tax records of the City of Richmond and includes .524 acres (22,833 square feet).

Boundary Justification: The boundary is the land owned by the William Byrd Associates, L.P.; it includes the original William Byrd Hotel and will include the contemporary additions to the building, the new driveway and parking area that fills the lot. The vacant lot to the west that fills the rest of the block is not owned by the Associates. The Broad Street Station across Broad Street is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the alley to the south is the north boundary of the Fan Historic District, also listed on the National Register. The Monument Avenue Historic District and the Branch House are a block and a half south on Davis Avenue. The Branch House, also designed by Pope, is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



4164
GUM SPRINGS (U.S. 522) 26 MI.
OILVILLE 13 MI.
35'
4162
GOOCHLAND 22 MI.
MANAKIN 9 MI.
4161
5459 11 SE (BON AIR)
4160
4159

18/282100/415970

WILLIAM BYRD HOTEL
RICHMOND, VA
ATM REFERENCE
POINTS
- 18/282620
- 18/415970

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